

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
DATE 1/29/2014

Committee Members Present: Paul DeFazio, Tracey Metivier, Larry Thomas, Kevin Powers, Larry Stern, Thom Freeman, Sue Dring, Heidi Krockta, Cal Calnan, Patrick Mosesso, John Chlebek

Members Absent: Jeff Anderson

Others Present: Lorraine Brue, Randy Scollins, Vicki Lowe, John Gray, Paul Goden, Jen Savickas, Jack Authelet, Marie Crimmins, Kirstin Hovey

Notes taken by: Kristin Meehan Papianou

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00PM by Paul DeFazio, Chairman.

7:00PM – Snow and Ice – Randy Scollins (for Roger Hill). Snow and Ice is intentionally under budgeted. In order to over expend the budget the Town Manager must declare an emergency so that they Ad Comm can approve the budget overage.

John Chlebek asked if the state reimburses for overages as he thought he understood that from one of the selectmen. Randy said that is occasionally the case in certain situations FEMA will reimburse up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the approved amount. He said he thinks that has happened once in the years he has been here. Additional discussion of the budget, overages and reimbursement.

7:10PM Larry Thomas moved that we vote to exceed the snow and ice budget. Tracey seconded.

VOTE: 11-0-0

7:15PM – Council on Aging & Human Services – Vicki Lowe. Thom, Ad Comm liaison, advised that it's level funding. Thom said that it's important to note the aging population of the Town and anticipated future increase in needs. Vicki Lowe advised that she is looking for 10 additional outreach hours due to the trend in growth of the aging population. Vicki shared some slides outlining the growth area and the services provided over the last year. Transportation, care giver support, fuel assistance, application assistance, and resource information are the areas that they are asked to help with the most frequently. Discussion of what these services consist of and the economic impact of each. Discussion of the cost and savings associated with the Van Go rides as well as the impact to local merchants. Discussion of health care costs and services.

Since 2011, the number of seniors being seen at the senior center has gone up by over 500 people which is an impact to the services. Larry Stern asked if the budget is increasing in terms of man power. Larry Stern said that it looks to him like salary and wages have gone up by a larger percent than the

population has gone up. Vicki explained that she had been paying someone out of professional services to help people with transportation but she should have been paid as an employee, so they had to transfer those payments which makes it look like salaries are going up but really it was a shift from operations. Randy explained that there were a number of reclassifications to comply with reporting requirements. Tracey asked if Meals on Wheels is part of this budget. Vicki advised that that is a State project. Tracey asked if these services are provided based on need. Vicki advised that most programs do have some needs criteria.

Larry Thomas asked how we compare to other Towns in terms of what percentage of our budget goes to this Council. Vicki said she didn't know but she did know that Mansfield has four and a half full time social workers where we have one. They have two departments, social services and a council on aging and ours is combined into one.

Discussion of how people in the community know about the services that are available. Vicki discussed several ways that people find out about services. Discussion of the salary of the former social worker (Noreen) versus the new social worker (Pam) and their experience levels. Tracey asked Vicki why she isn't asking for more. Vicki said she's been asking for a 19 hour position for years and hasn't been getting it so she thought she'd lower it to 10. Tracey shared her opinion that they should be asking for the full 19 hours. Paul DeFazio said that we can discuss this separately and then come back with a recommendation.

7:52PM – Historical Commission (budget 691) – Paul Goden, Vice-Chairmen, Jen Savickas, Chairman, Jack Authelet, Marie Crimmins and Kristin Hovey

Kevin Powers is the Ad Comm liaison and he provided some background into the budget and conditions at Memorial Hall. Randy Scollins offered some information about a grant that they are working with Sharon Wasson to apply for that matches the budget one for one.

Larry Thomas asked what the gross they are asking for is. Jen advised it is conservatively between \$200,000 - \$250,000. Randy clarified with half of that coming from a grant. Paul asked who is responsible for maintenance of the building. Jen advised that it's been done by the volunteer commission. She advised that Bob Hicks did an assessment of maintenance needs and brought requests one at a time. Last year the money was approved to re-point Powder Hill House but the furnace went so they had to convert to gas which was expensive (\$26,000).

Thom asked if there was any discussion of storage of the archives at the new Town Hall. Jen said that she is a big advocate for off-site storage. Thom asked about storage / display space at the Library. Jack said that they currently have a project going with a Mr. Wall in Foxboro who is recreating in miniature the center of Town circa 1900 and the Library has agreed to give up floor space for that. He said that the Library did at one time have more historical items on the walls and he doesn't think they are anxious to move back in that direction.

Discussion about work that has been done on Memorial Hall as well as the condition of the other buildings. Jack talked about the Mass 55th unit and that it was commanded by one of our officers and they made a very significant contribution to the Civil War. He said that he got a call out of the blue the other night from a man at a military show down south. A man there had a photo of Major Torrey and all his medals – they are trying to track this picture down and see what it would cost to get it back to Foxboro.

Jack asked for a couple of extra minutes to address the Ad Comm. Jack addressed the condition of the conservation buildings and the need to have a town body with expertise to care for the buildings and perform maintenance. Jack said that these buildings are being demolished by neglect.

No further questions. Paul thanked the commissions and Kevin for his work as liaison.

7:25PM – Library – Jerry Cirillo, Tom Magee, Kevin Penders. Introduced by Kevin Powers, Ad Comm liaison, who advised that the budget is largely consistent with the prior year with a request to fund some Sunday hours as they've seen renewed interest since the Library reopened. Those Sunday hours would be mid-October through April. Library employee contracts are currently under negotiations and will be completed before Town Meeting. Tracey advised that the Ad Comm policy is that contracts need to be before the Ad Comm at least two weeks prior to Town Meeting. Jerry advised that they believe they are on track for that.

Tracey asked why the Sunday hours are limited to the months mentioned. Kevin Penders advised that it's related to contracts and Jerry also advised that they do see visits drop off during the warmer weather. They will keep an eye on the needs / demand for Sunday hours and will renegotiate for more if the need is demonstrated. Discussion of union staff members who get paid time and a half on Sundays. Heidi asked what the hours would be on Sundays and Jerry advised that they are looking at 1 – 5PM. Discussion of staffing levels. Discussion of a new patron counting system and the fact that it has been unreliable but is under repair so those numbers should be available in the future. Discussion of the use of Kindles. Discussion of coordination with the school IT staff as well as the maintenance staff.

No further questions. Paul thanked the presenters.

8:50PM – Veterans (budget 543) – Michael Johns. Thom is the Ad Comm liaison and advised that this is a level funded budget. Michael gave some background about the last four years, the services and the costs. He acknowledged that the community has been very supportive. He shared that the requirement for services is going up despite the veteran population decreasing. Discussion of the four town agreement to coordinate services. Michael explained that our fiscal ties with the other towns were severed during 2013 so we're back to operating independently financially. Discussion of the services and financial support that is offered through the program as well as the number of people who get services through the program (currently 23). Tracey asked how our numbers compare to the other towns around us. Michael advised that Easton has about 40 cases and Norton had about 44 and Mansfield is almost the same as what we have.

Paul asked if Michael has considered how to get information out to the public about services and benefits that are available. Michael agreed that is important and that he does some of that. He starts with the High School – he works with the guidance counselors there and offers his card and services to kids who are going into the military after graduation. He said he is also often approached by parents. He also does presentations on cable access a few times a year and he visits the Senior Center to talk about various topics that would impact them. Discussion of pay differentials and work that was done over the last couple of years. Discussion of maintenance fees for veterans graves, the bronze markers and the Memorial Day flags. That fee has increased from \$3.00 to \$4.00 or \$4.50 per grave per year.

Ad Comm thanked Michael for his good work. No further questions.

9:15PM – Recreation – Deb Giardino and Heather Harding. Kevin Powers, Ad Comm liaison, advised that there are only two really significant changes. There were some cost savings and a capital outlay request for funds to repair the tennis courts. The tennis courts request was denied previously by the Ad Comm. Deb indicated that they are level funded, no new positions. She said that in the 14 years that she's been the director they've only asked for one other capital outlay item – repair of a fence – and the board recommended the fence be removed. They are back now with another capital expense to repair the tennis courts. They put out for three bids and only one responded. There are over 417 linear feet of cracks in the tennis courts. Discussion of expenses that the recreation department has incurred including lost rental income, uninsured damage to the Payson Street irrigation system as well as other projects that they have done.

Heidi asked what happens if the courts aren't fixed. Deb said that the cracked courts aren't a safety issue so the Board would have to make a decision about whether they could afford it. Heather said that eventually the courts would have to go, but that wouldn't be immediate.

Kevin Powers discussed the revised numbers in the budget. Discussion of lower revenue as a result of fewer fields to rent – could be \$15,000 - \$17,000 in addition to the tenant who didn't pay rent or his water bill. Discussion of two additional fields that will be available at Payson in 2015.

Discussion of the tennis courts being a town facility rather than strictly a Recreation facility in terms of funding. Deb said she feels that the Town needs to step up and take care of their property rather than the Rec department funding it all. They maintain five facilities and they don't typically come to the Town for funding.

No further questions for Recreation.

9:45PM – School Budget Sub Committee Report - Discussion led by Larry Thomas. He, Larry Stern and Heidi met with the Bill Yukna and Debbie Spinelli to discuss the budget. The changes are mostly salaries. The school committee asked for a "heads up" about the issues that this committee might have questions about. Larry Thomas asked the members to send him an email with any specific questions. Tracey asked

if there is anything that they should focus on in their review. Larry Thomas offered some thoughts including a recent school committee choice to hire a health specialist rather than a math specialist. Tracey asked Larry to have them to have the SAT scores available. Discussion that there should actually be School Committee members available to meet with us.

Larry Stern asked if it's possible with the current Town Manager situation that the budget wasn't scrutinized as much as it has been previously. Randy Scollins said that Bob (Cutler) and he have met with all the departments and they've reduced the requests by about \$350,000 and he thinks that by the time they are done it will approach a half a million.

Tracey explained that we have two more weeks of budget presentation and then Ad Com will have time to discuss among themselves and also bring people back as needed. She also mentioned that there are going to be approximately 40 warrant articles for the next Town Meeting. Larry Thomas advised that the Board of Selectmen had an RFP go out to look at leasing space for the Town Hall, so what does that do to the DPW proposal. He said that we'll be looking to do that same sort of comparison. Randy said that he did speak with Roger Hill today and they are not going to have that proposal for the May Town Meeting. Roger said that he will have that firmed up for the fall Special Town Meeting. Randy said that if the lease RPF is successful and it goes to the May Town Meeting, then he'll put a lease amount in the Town Hall budget. Larry Thomas asked why they wouldn't go into the lease space. Roger is going to want to be all together at the Town Garage.

10:10PM Motion to Adjourn by Tracey. Seconded by Thom.

Vote: 11-0-0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting:

Vote:

Signature of Chairperson

Signature of Secretary